

Message Text

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ACTION CA-01

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FM AMEMBASSY CARACAS
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FOR ASST. SEC BARBARA M. WATSON AND ASST. SEC. TODMAN FROM AMBASSADOR

E.O. 11652: N/A
TAGS: CVIS, OEXC, VE
SUBJECT: VENEZUELAN GOVERNMENT SCHOLARSHIP STUDENTS IN U.S.

REF: CARACAS 2368 AND PREVIOUS

1. CONGEN WAS SUMMONED TO FOREIGN MINISTRY MARCH 13 BY CARRILLO, ACTING DIRECTOR CONSULAR AFFAIRS, ON MATTER LATEST INCIDENT INVOLVING RETURN VENEZUELAN SCHOLARSHIP STUDENTS TO VENEZUELA TO OBTAIN STUDENT VISAS (REFTEL). ACTING DIRECTOR, WITH DELIBERATION AND HEAVY HEAD, TOLD CONGEN THAT FOREIGN MINISTRY HAD ALWAYS BEEN MOST COOPERATIVE WITH THE EMBASSY IN ALL MATTERS AND PARTICULARLY WITH VISA REQUESTS, IN FACT, GIVING US PREFERENTIAL TREATMENT, ACTING DIRECTOR STATED THAT THIS COOPERATION WAS VALUED AND HE HOPED THAT IT COULD BE CONTINUED FROM BOTH SIDES. HE SAID THAT THE FOREIGN MINISTRY HAD UNDERSTOOD THAT THERE WOULD BE NO MORE FORCED DEPARTURES OF VENEZUELAN STUDENTS FROM THE U.S. AND THAT A SYSTEM HAD BEEN DEVELOPED WITHIN THE AMERICAN GOVERNMENT TO PREVENT THIS. HE THEN SPENT CONSIDERABLE TIME EMPHASIZING THE IMPORTANCE TO BOTH VENEZUELA AND THE U.S. OF THE GRAN MARISCAL PROGRAM AND THE CONCERN FELT BY THE GOV OF THE NEGATIVE IMPACT UNFORTUANTE EXPERIECES WITH
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THE AMERICAN BUREAUCRACY WOULD HAVE ON THE FUTURE LEADERS OF VENEZUELA. ACTING DIRECTOR THEN SAID THAT THE IMPRESSION WAS BEING GAINED THAT THE AMERICAN GOVERNMENT WAS NOT ATTCHING PROPER IMPORTANCE OR URGENCY TO THE PROBLEMS BEING ENCOUNTERED BY THE VENEZUELAN STUDENTS. CONGEN REPLIED IN SOME LENGTH AND DETAIL THAT THIS IMPRESSION WAS ENTIRELY FALSE BECAUSE THE AMERICAN GOVERNMENT WAS KEENLY AWARE OF THE IMPORTANCE OF THE SUCCESS OF THE GRAN

MARISCAL PROGRAM FOR BOTH VENEZUELA AND THE U.S. AND THAT THE EMBASSY HAD REACTED QUICKLY IN EVERY INSTANCE TO ALERT WASHINGTON OF INDIVIDUAL PROBLEMS AS THEY AROSE. CONGEN SAID HE WAS UNABLE TO EXPLAIN WHAT HAD GONE WRONG IN THE LAST INCIDENT (REFTEL) BUT THAT ALL AVAILABLE INFORMATION HAD BEEN SENT IMMEDIATELY TO THE DEPT. BY THE EMBASSY AND THE ACTING DIRECTOR WOULD BE INFORMED AS SOON AS A REPLY TO THE REFTEL WAS RECEIVED. ACTING DIRECTOR SAID HE WOULD BE GRATEFUL FOR AN EXPLANATION BECAUSE HE HAD WRITTEN INSTRUCTIONS FROM FEB. 8 FROM THE FOREIGN MINISTER TO MONITOR THESE PROBLEMS AND TO KEEP THE MINISTER INFORMED FOR US IN CABINET MEETINGS.

2. UNDOUBTEDLY, CARRILLO WAS ACTING UNDER INSTRUCTIONS AND THIS REEMPHASIZES GOV CONCERN FOR THIS PROBLEM. IT ALSO UNDERSCORES MY PREOCCUPATION THAT THIS QUESTION MIGHT NEEDLESSLY BE RAISED IN FORTHCOMING PRESIDENTIAL VISIT. APPRECIATE ALL YOUR EFFORTS TO SEE THAT STATE-INS ARRANGEMENT OPERATES SMOOTHLY.
VAKY

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